

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: JUNE 5, 2013

TO: MEMBERS OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

FROM: T&ES STAFF

SUBJECT: AGENDA ITEM # 8 - STAFF UPDATES

ISSUE: Staff update to Transportation Commission on various ongoing projects

RECOMMENDATION: That the Commission receive the staff update.

A. CRYSTAL CITY / POTOMAC YARD (ROUTE 1) TRANSITWAY

The City received a TIGER grant for the Crystal City/Potomac Yard Transitway totaling \$8.5 million. The grant was allocated to the design/build of the Route 1 Transitway between Monroe Avenue and Potomac Avenue in dedicated lanes. Five other grants have been received to aid in the design/construction of various elements within the Transitway project. The total cost of the Transitway including vehicles is approximately \$20 million.

Construction began in July 2012 on the Transitway and is anticipated to be completed in December 2013. Heavy and hazardous materials have been found on-site during excavation. The contractor is working with the City to dispose of the materials correctly.

The first section of the Transitway (between Swann Avenue and E. Custis Avenue) was poured April 3, 2013. Concrete pours will continue to the south over the next several months.

In the first three weeks of June, work will be dependent on the weather, but continued construction is anticipated within the Transitway from Hume to Swann and from Howell to Custis as well as the widening of Route 1 between Potomac Avenue and Howell Avenue. Further widening of Route 1 is necessary to allow for sufficient area in the median to construct two stations on the north side of Potomac Avenue. The first pour of the colored concrete at the station platform locations within the transitway is scheduled towards the end of June. The left turn lane from Southbound Route 1 to Eastbound Potomac Avenue has been removed from service as of March 28, 2013 to allow for the southbound station at Potomac Avenue.

Staff will provide a full update to the Transportation Commission in July on the station platform elements design including the location and design of the shelter, off-board fare collection, real time passenger information, benches, trash receptacles, signage, lighting, etc.

The City and Arlington County participated in a work group with WMATA to develop the branding concept for the premium service that will operate in the Transitway. With the

support of marketing firm Pulsar Advertising, the work group held three focus groups, conducted an online survey, and reviewed a variety of design concepts for the new brand. Staff will provide a full update to the Transportation Commission in July, including the recommended design.

For more information on the Route 1 Transitway project please see visit:

<http://www.alexandriava.gov/tes/info/default.aspx?id=58644>.

B. POTOMAC YARD METRORAIL STATION

The Potomac Yard Metro project is an infill Metrorail station located between the National Airport and Braddock Road Metrorail stations on the Blue and Yellow lines in the vicinity of the Potomac Yard Development.

The development of the draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the project is currently underway. The project team is advancing the socioeconomic, environmental, and transportation impact assessments for the no build and three build alternatives. When complete, the DEIS will comprehensively assess the environmental effects of the build alternatives and the no-build alternative, and will address key environmental considerations, including air quality and climate change, transportation and land use, visual resources, parklands, historic and cultural resources, noise, vibration, wetlands and habitats, and temporary construction impacts.

Under the initial schedule, the DEIS was to be released on May 3, 2013, followed by several Community Education and Discussion Workshops and a public hearing scheduled for the last week in June. However, during the preliminary agency review, several technical changes and amendments were recommended, which the project team is incorporating into the draft. With this additional work, it became clear the original schedule could not be met and public engagement would have occurred during the summer, which would have resulted in less opportunity for community input.

To encourage public participation, the City requested, and the cooperating agencies agreed, to modify the schedule so the DEIS will be released in the fall, followed by additional public outreach meetings and a public hearing. The Alexandria City Council likely will consider the selection of a preferred alternative in late fall 2013. This shift in the schedule will enable maximum civic engagement by holding the community meetings and the DEIS hearing when the community and stakeholders in this process are able to be fully present to participate. The shift will also allow the City and cooperating agencies more time to discuss the impacts of the alternatives.

The Potomac Yard Metrorail Implementation Group (PYMIG) will hold their next meeting on June 10, 2013 at City Hall in the Council Workroom from 6:30-8:30pm. The focus of that meeting will be to update the group and citizens on the process to date, review the impacts from the Draft EIS, and discuss the community outreach process that will occur between the release of the Draft EIS and the City Council determining the preferred alternative.

For more information on the project, please visit www.alexandriava.gov/potomacyard.

C. DASH COMPREHENSIVE OPERATIONS ANALYSIS (COA)

The City and Alexandria Transit Company (ATC) recently initiated an update to the DASH Comprehensive Operational Analysis (COA). The last complete COA of the DASH bus system was conducted in 2005 with additional onboard data collected in 2008. Transportation Management and Design, Inc. (TMD) was hired to conduct the update to the COA, and initiated the project in October 2012. The study includes an evaluation of existing data and previous reports, collection of a complete set of new data based on current service, and development of short and long range recommendations to improve and expand service in the future. The long range recommendations will take into consideration the future implementation of each of the City's planned high-capacity transitway network.

The goal of the COA is to develop and prioritize short and long range solutions to improve the quality, efficiency, and effectiveness of the ATC fixed route transit system that would address the following issues:

- Service frequency
- Travel times
- On-time performance
- Connectivity
- Productivity
- Latent demand or underserved areas
- Overcrowding
- Underutilized service
- Planned high-capacity transit improvements

An early project component is to conduct stakeholder outreach as well as collect information from riders and non-riders. The consultant team conducted interviews in March/April 2013 with key stakeholders to get feedback on DASH's role within the community and region, service and network priorities, and determine areas that need improvement. The stakeholders included the City Council, members of various City commissions (e.g., Environmental Policy Commission, Transportation Commission, Commission on Persons with Disabilities, Commission on Aging), ATC staff and drivers, Alexandria Community Public Schools (ACPS), business representatives, Inova Hospital and City staff.

In addition to the stakeholder input, TMD has already completed on-board rider surveys and a telephone survey. The rider survey will be used to obtain demographic characteristics, origin and destination information, other key travel behavior data and satisfaction of current riders. The telephone survey will be used to collect statistically valid information from DASH users and non-users in order to aid the future growth of DASH. The results of the stakeholder outreach and on-board and telephone surveys will be available in July, and staff will bring the results to the Commission at its July 2013 meeting.

During the Summer of 2013, the City and DASH will be conducting a broader online survey to introduce the project to the general public and get input on priorities for DASH service and expansion. The survey will include questions similar to those used for the stakeholder interviews and telephone survey. The first public meeting/open house will be held in September 2013 to provide an overview of the project, results of the stakeholder and survey input, and receive initial input on key issues and needs.

In addition to the stakeholder, rider and non-rider input, the consultant team will use existing data and the data collected during the on-board survey for a comprehensive service evaluation. The team is currently compiling the information to conduct a market analysis to determine the transit demand for the region based on market segmentation, travel patterns and transit competitiveness. Recommendations to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of existing programs and services will be made, with short- and long-term timeframes. These may include proposed route alignments, service frequencies and spans, and vehicle requirements. The project is anticipated to be complete by early 2014.